

Appl. No.: 10/528,528

Amdt. dated 03/10/2009

Reply to Office actions of 09/19/2008 and 02/26/2009

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A gift certificate service system for managing sales, gifting, and usage of electronic gift certificates according to a request by a user's communication terminal through a wired network, wireless network, or both, comprising:

a gift certificate service server for managing purchase, gifting, and usage operations on the electronic gift certificates from the communication terminal;

a gift certificate database, accessed by the gift certificate service server, for storing electronic gift certificate information prior to transferring the gift certificate to a transferee, and processing a reply to an inquiry of electronic gift certificate usage from the gift certificate service server; and

a network server, accessed by the gift certificate service server and accessed by the user's communication terminal through the wired network, wireless network, or both, for performing a client interface function with the purchase, gifting, and usage of the electronic gift certificates, and transmitting the user's gift certificate purchase particulars and gift certificate information for usage of the corresponding gift certificate to the communication terminal,

wherein the electronic gift certificate is a multimedia message including barcode ~~image~~ data, wherein the network server is responsive to use of the electronic gift certificate occasioned by displaying the barcode data on the communication terminal, and wherein the electronic gift certificate information stored by the gift certificate database includes at least one of a gifting history of the gift certificates ~~[[and]]~~or a usage history of the gift certificates.

2. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the gift certificate service server comprises:
means for receiving a user's purchase request from the communication terminal;
means for checking a settlement state of the electronic gift certificate bought by the user,
means for settling the electronic gift certificate bought by the user, and issuing the bought electronic gift certificate to the user, when the user requests settlement;
means for storing the issued gift certificate information in the gift certificate database;
and

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means for notifying the user of the gift certificate purchase particulars in a message format.

3. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the gift certificate service server comprises:

means for receiving a user's gifting request from the communication terminal;

means for inquiring an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user of the gift certificate database, and determining the existence state;

means for receiving information on the gift certificate to be gifted and a transferee when the user's gift certificate is found;

means for transmitting the gift certificate selected by the user to the transferee;

means for updating the users gift certificate information, storing the updated information in the gift certificate database together with the transferee's gift certificate information; and

means for notifying the user of the gift certificate gifting information in a message format.

4. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, comprising:

means for receiving a user's usage request from the communication terminal;

means for inquiring the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user, and determining the existence state;

means for settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible;

means for allowing processing of the settlement on the price information when the settlement is possible based on the usage of the gift certificate;

means for settling the user's gift certificate information, updating the settlement information, and storing the updated information in the gift certificate database; and

means for notifying the user of the gift certificate usage information in a message format.

5. (currently amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server

to manage sales of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired networks, wireless networks, or both, comprising:

- (a) receiving a user's purchase request from the communication terminal which displays barcode data upon use of the electronic gift certificate;
- (b) checking a settlement state of the electronic gift certificate, wherein checking a settlement state of the electronic gift certificate comprises checking a settlement state of a multimedia message including barcode data;
- (c) settling the electronic gift certificate, and issuing the electronic gift certificate to the user, when the user requests settlement;
- (d) storing the issued gift certificate information in the gift certificate database prior to transferring the gift certificate to a transferee, ~~wherein the electronic gift certificate is a multimedia message including barcode image data, and wherein~~ storing the issued gift certificate information comprises storing the gift certificate database stores electronic gift certificate information including at least one of a gifting history of the gift certificates [[and]] or a usage history of the gift certificates; and
- (e) notifying the user of the gift certificate purchase particulars and gift certificate information for usage of the corresponding gift certificate in a message format.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising: checking the user's membership authentication state.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein in (a), the purchase request includes information on a category of the gift certificates desired by the user ~~and~~, a price, and a number of gift certificates.

8. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein in (c), the settlement price of the bought electronic gift certificate is summed with the users communication terminal usage fee, and the summed price and fee are then settled.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein in (e), the message format includes a SMS (short message service) format or a MMS (multimedia message service) format.

10. (currently amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server to manage gifting of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired networks, wireless networks, or both, comprising:

(a) receiving a ~~users~~ user's gifting request from the communication terminal which displays barcode data upon use of the electronic gift certificate;

(b) inquiring within the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user, and determining the existence state, wherein inquiring within the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate comprises inquiring of an existence state of the electronic gift certificate is a multimedia message including barcode image data, and wherein the gift certificate database stores inquiring of electronic gift certificate information including at least one of a gifting history of the gift certificates [[and]] or a usage history of the gift certificates;

(c) receiving information on the gift certificate to be gifted and a transferee when the user's gift certificate is found;

(d) transmitting the gift certificate selected by the user to the transferee based upon the determined existence of the gift certificate;

(e) updating the user's gift certificate information, storing the updated information in the gift certificate database together with the transferee's gift certificate information; and

(f) notifying the user of the gift certificate gifting information in a message format.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, further comprising: checking the user's membership authentication state between (a) and (b), and

further comprising: performing a gift certificate buying process when the user has no gift certificate in (b).

12. (original) The method of claim 10, further comprising: determining whether an additional gift to be transmitted together with the gift certificate is provided, and receiving corresponding information when the additional gift is found according to the determination, after (c), and

transmitting the gift certificate and the additional gift to the transferee in (d).

13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the additional gift includes a bell sound, a theme card, background music, and a character.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein in (f), the message format includes a SMS (short message service) format or MMS (multimedia message service) format.

15. (currently amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server to manage usage of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired and wireless networks, comprising:

(a) receiving the user's usage request from the communication terminal;

(b) inquiring the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user, and determining the existence state prior to transferring the gift certificate to a transferee, wherein determining the existence state comprises determining the existence state of the electronic gift certificate is a multimedia message including barcode image data, and wherein the gift certificate database stores determining the existence state of electronic gift certificate information including at least one of a gifting history of the gift certificates [[and]]or a usage history of the gift certificates;

(c) settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible, wherein settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible comprises presenting the gift certificate by displaying barcode data on the communication terminal;

(d) allowing processing of the settlement on the price information when the settlement is possible based on the usage of the gift certificate;

(e) settling the user's gift certificate information, updating the settlement information, and storing the updated information in the gift certificate database; and

(f) notifying the user of the gift certificate usage information in a message format.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising; checking the user's membership authentication state between (a) and (b), and

further comprising; performing a gift certificate buying process when the user has no gift certificate in (b).

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein in (f), the message format includes a SMS (short message service) format or a MMS (multimedia message service) format.

18. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from the user's mobile communication terminal.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the mobile communication terminal has a credit card function therein.

20. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from a chain store's card terminal according to a card usage by the user.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the user's card is a membership card for membership authentication by service providers including a communication service provider and a distribution company.

22. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the user's card is a brand card.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from an online shopping mall, when the user buys a desired product at the online

shopping mall and requires an online settlement using the gift certificate, wherein the online shopping mall includes at least one online shop.

24. (currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the history of the gift certificate certificates is classified by types, users, and prices of the gift certificates.

25. (new) The method of claim 15, wherein presenting the gift certificate by displaying barcode data on the communication terminal comprises presenting the gift certificate to an offline store by displaying barcode data.

26. (new) The method of claim 15, wherein settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible comprises authenticating the user based on at least one of a telephone number associated with the communication terminal or an electronic gift certificate password.

27. (new) The method of claim 5, wherein receiving a user's purchase request from the communication terminal comprises receiving a request of a reference to a gift certificate and providing information about the gift certificate.